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Dhaka Mahanagar Shishu Hospital is hit by crises



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He achieves the feat in a BPL game

DIGITAL BIRTH REGISTRATION

New system brings forth new hassles

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

If you don't have a 17-digit birth registration certificate, get ready for a complex and stressful task to obtain one.

You just cannot do without it because having this certificate is now mandatory for every individual to be entitled for over a dozen citizen services.

Sharmin Islam and her husband have 16-digit certificates. But when Sharmin tried to fill in an application form online for her daughter's birth certificate last month, their numbers were not accepted as the valid ones must be of 17 digits.

She needed the certificate to get her daughter admitted to a school.

"No educational institution will enroll my daughter without a birth registration certificate. Now, my husband and I are desperately trying to get our birth registration certificates. Having those is a prerequisite for getting our daughter's certificate," Sharmin told The Daily Star recently.

The government made registration of birth online mandatory since January 1 last year to avail 18 citizen services, including enrolment in educational institutions, registration for secondary school certificate exams, applying for passport, and driving licence.

Besides, children aged 12 and above, who are entitled to Covid-19 vaccine, also require a digital birth registration certificate.

However, thousands of people like Sharmin are suffering delays due to the slow and complicated delivery process of the vital document.

"The new application system has been designed in a way that it will not accept any birth registration number which is less than 17 digits," said Sharmin.

She alleged that a group of opportunist staffers are profiting from this chaotic situation.

The birth register portal now logs around one lakh applications every day.

Visiting some regional offices of Dhaka north and south city corporations recently, this correspondent found many brokers promising people prompt delivery of the certificate in exchange for money.

In front of Khilgaon regional office of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), a city resident gave Tk 7,000 to a middleman to get three birth certificates within a week.

"If you don't use these brokers, the city corporation staffers would ask for a lot of documents and find 'errors' in all those. To avoid such harassment, I had to spend the money," he said requesting anonymity.

The certificate delivery receipt mentions a date 15 days from submitting of related documents. But people have to wait for over a month to get it.

The application process to get a 17-digit certificate is so complex that many often make mistakes and are compelled to go for a time-consuming and expensive correction procedure.

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Six-month-old Akhil fast asleep in a hanging basket next to his mother Ratna, who is busy dressing fish at Meradia kitchen market in the capital's Banasree area. Ratna's husband does not work, so she has to toil the entire day to feed her family, including her three children. She barely earns Tk 350 daily by cutting and cleaning the fish that people buy from the market. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

EC FORMATION LAW

JS body suggests cosmetic changes

'All professionals can be eligible'; it's a law for search panel, not commission: BNP MP

RASHIDUL HASAN

The parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry yesterday finalised the Election Commission bill after recommending some changes, including in the criteria for appointment of the chief election commissioner and other commissioners.

The final report will be placed in parliament tomorrow, and the Jatiya Sangsad is likely to pass the bill on Thursday, said chief of the committee Shahiduzzaman Sarker, who is an Awami League MP.

The report was finalised during a two-hour meeting at the JS Bhaban.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Shahiduzzaman said one of the sections of the bill says any person convicted for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude and sentenced to at least two years' imprisonment will not be eligible for the post of CEC and other commissioners.

"We have recommended removing the words 'two years' from that section. We want no person convicted in a criminal case involving moral turpitude to be appointed as the CEC or other

commissioners," he said.

Besides, the bill says in order to hold the EC posts, one should have at least 20 years of work experience in any important government, judicial, semi-government or private posts.

"The committee has recommended to add 'autonomous and other professions' besides the words 'government, judicial, semi-government or private posts' in that section," he said.

"If the amendments are acknowledged and then the bill is passed, people from

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Positivity rate second highest since outbreak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Covid situation in Bangladesh is fast taking an ominous turn with the infection rate spiralling tenfold in three weeks.

Yesterday, the positivity rate was 32.37 percent, the second-highest since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in March 2020. On January 3, it was only 3 percent.

In the 24 hours to 8 am yesterday, the health directorate reported 14,828 cases of Covid-19 – the highest since August 3 last year, when 15,777 cases were registered.

The government is monitoring the situation, and if necessary, would extend the existing embargoes, Farhad Hossain, the state minister for public administration, told journalists at the secretariat yesterday.

In the past week since Sunday, the weekly case detection has increased by about 181 percent.

The caseload may swell even more in February, Hossain said.

"Everyone needs to be aware. We want to get over the third wave as early as possible. That is why everyone

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Display fares on digital boards

HC asks BRTA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to take effective steps to stop overcharging of passengers on public transport.

In response to a writ petition, the court ordered Bangladesh Road Transport Authority to ensure the display of lists of fares on electronic boards at every stop across the country within a month.

The authorities have also been asked to submit a report to the HC after complying.

The HC also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in four weeks why their failure to stop bus owners and their employees from charging passengers extra should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the court asked the authorities to

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One of the fasting students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology gets intravenous rehydration yesterday, on the sixth day of their hunger strike demanding resignation of their VC Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

President now 'our only hope'

Sust students say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protesting students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology are waiting for President Abdul Hamid's response to their open letter sent to Bangabhaban on January 18.

As their discussion with the Education Minister Dipu Moni early Sunday failed to bring a solution and no further meeting was called in till Monday afternoon, the students now say the president, who is also the chancellor of the university, is their only hope.

During a press briefing yesterday afternoon, a spokesperson for the students said, "After the first formal virtual meeting, we tried to communicate with the education minister. But we could not as she urged us to withdraw the hunger strike before the meeting."

"We wrote an open letter with signatures we collected to support our demand, to the president and sent it to the Bangabhaban. Now, we await his response."

Another protester said, "Our protest is logical and there is no involvement of any vested interest. People in responsible sectors are being given wrong information about our protests."

Over the last few days, Dipu Moni, Hasan Mahmud, minister for information and broadcasting, Dhaka University Teachers Association and Bangladesh University Parishad in different programmes and statements have said vested quarters might be involved with the students' movement.

However, University Teachers' Network also expressed solidarity by observing a symbolic hunger strike

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